

AN
EXAMINATION
OF THE
CAUSES AND CONDUCT
OF THE
PRESENT WAR WITH FRANCE.

[Price 2s. 6d.]

EXAMINATION

CAUSES AND CONSEQUENCES

OF THE

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BY

AN
EXAMINATION
OF THE
CAUSES AND CONDUCT
OF THE
PRESENT WAR WITH FRANCE;
AND OF
THE MOST EFFECTUAL MEANS OF OBTAINING
A SPEEDY, A SECURE, AND AN HONOURABLE
PEACE:
TOGETHER WITH
Some Observations on the late NEGOTIATION
at *LISLE.*

Tu ne cede malis, sed contra audentior ito. *VIRGIL.*

LONDON:

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EXAMINATION,

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IF men are led by imperceptible steps, and the hideous forms, from which they would otherwise have recoiled with horror, are artfully concealed from their view, till they are clasped in their embraces, it is astonishing what sentiments they may, at last, be brought to adopt, and to what glaring inconsistencies they may be carried. With many it is become habitual to admire the opinions, the practices, and achievements of the French, whatever be their nature and peculiar complexion, and to exhaust all the powers of sophistry in order to strip them of every appearance of folly or wickedness, and to invest them with the fairest colours of propriety and justice. By the strangest combination of contrarieties,

traries, those who denominate themselves Whigs, and used to be most averse from French principles, are grown their greatest abettors. If it could, indeed, be alleged, with any shadow of reason, that those principles, and the conduct which they prescribe, were become more friendly to the liberties of mankind, this extraordinary conversion would be less astonishing. But melancholy experience has proved that the same spirit of ambition, of conquest, and of universal dominion which animated that nation under its monarchical, still actuates it under its present government, to which it is not easy to assign an appropriate name. It is difficult, therefore, to conceive how the friends of liberty can patronize a system characterised by the most oppressive spirit, and endeavour to justify or to palliate every proceeding which is adopted under its influence. This inconsistency will naturally lead every discerning and impartial man to suspect that no sincere regard for the liberties and the happiness of mankind, which are intimately connected, but other less honourable motives, influence those who obstinately persevere in attachment to a cause which their own professed principles should lead them to condemn.

But how comes it, then, to pass that many who, in the beginning, strongly reprobated the French system, and hastily united in counteracting it, adopted afterwards very different sentiments,
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and views in the mildest light what formerly excited their strongest aversion? For this phenomenon, the natural operation of events, the fickleness of the human character, the repeated effect of declamation and sophistry, the unavoidable pressure of the war, and the power of habit, which reconciles men to the most disgusting circumstances, are fully sufficient to account. But, to an attentive observer of the progress of opinion, it is curious to attend to the gradual steps by which the most contradictory sentiments may be introduced into the mind, and invest men's conduct with the most striking colours of inconsistency. When the French, after having put to death their sovereign, and disgraced their name by a series of the blackest cruelties, had conquered the Austrian Netherlands, and invaded Holland, who, then, dared to vindicate their conduct, or refused to acknowledge that we were bound to stand forth in defence of our ally? At least, the great majority of the public would have exclaimed against any minister who would have tamely acquiesced in the conquest of the Austrian Netherlands, and in the subjugation of the Seven United Provinces.

But after having heard reiterated encomiums on the French republic, many, who were before filled with abhorrence of the conduct of its temporary rulers, began to think them models of integrity, of humanity, of public spirit, and of every

social and civil virtue. Many, who confessed the necessity of our uniting with the continental powers in order to stop their destructive career, began to believe this necessity was merely ideal, and that we might with safety, and with honour, have allowed them to trample every other government and nation under foot. Many, who clearly perceived the pernicious tendency of their revolutionary schemes, openly avowed, and as openly reduced to practice, began to suppose that if a free course had been granted them by the admission of a thousand emissaries into this country, we should still have enjoyed internal tranquillity, and none of those scenes which have been displayed with such terrific aspect on the French theatre have been exhibited among us. Many, who considered the war as *just*, by reason of the aggression on the part of the enemy, and *necessary* for our own preservation, began to suppose that we had been dragged into it by his majesty's ministers, without *necessity*, and with the most flagrant *injustice*. So fickle is popular opinion, and while temporary impressions are allowed to operate to the extinction of every preceding sentiment, and to the preclusion of every wise anticipation of futurity, so apt is it to run into the most marked contrarieties !

Such fluctuations of opinion will always happen when men's judgments are not directed by rational and steady views, but by the varying succession of events,

events, and are laid open to the influence of that declamation which this so frequently affords opportunities of employing. In fact, that popular eloquence, whose object is not to inform the understanding, but to move and manage the passions, always artfully adapts itself to events, and, laying hold of the favourable circumstances which they present, applies them to the peculiar object of persuasion which it has in view. There are events, however, which require no aid of eloquence to enable them to make the strongest impression on every mind that is not utterly impenetrable to the force of truth. They speak, of themselves, the strongest language, and carry conviction even to such as had been deluded by false appearances, and cheated, as it were, out of those natural and just sentiments which their own unsophisticated reason had formerly adopted. Of this kind is the termination of the late negotiation at Lisle, and the unequivocal proofs of the duplicity and determined hostility of the French rulers towards Great Britain, which have lately been laid before the public. These have brought back numbers to their first opinion with regard to the war, and have even convinced many who reprobated it from the beginning. There is in the people of Great Britain, notwithstanding occasional paroxysms of delusion, a fund of good sense which enables them to see things in their proper light, when they are fairly represented, and momentary impressions are effaced by events which disclose

disclose truth more powerfully than the most elaborate disquisitions. As the right judgment to be formed with respect both to our present situation, and to the conduct we are still required to hold, depends on two or three simple inquiries, it may be proper to state and examine these as briefly as possible. To this the present period seems particularly favourable. The fluctuations which public opinion has experienced, appear to have restored men's minds to that middle state which promises to the cause of truth a patient hearing, and prepares them for its reception when it is fairly proposed to them without the affectation of ornament, and the artful insinuations of delusive eloquence.

Was the war in which we are engaged *necessary* and *unavoidable*? Has it hitherto been conducted, as far as the administration of this country has been concerned, with as much prudence and success as we had reason to expect, all circumstances considered? What are the most effectual means of obtaining a speedy, a fair, and an honourable peace? By *honourable* I understand that which is consistent with the dignity of Great Britain; and I maintain that any peace to which this epithet, thus understood, is not applicable, must, to this country, be detrimental for the present, and insecure for the future. These are the only subjects that seem necessary to be discussed, to enable us to form a just estimate of our situation in the present awful crisis,

and to adopt, and persevere in, that conduct which that situation dictates.

1. Was the war in which we are engaged *necessary* and *unavoidable*?

That war is one of the most horrible scourges of humanity, that it is the most sacred duty of those to whom the great concerns of nations are committed, to guard them, to the utmost of their power, from its horrible desolation, and that they ought never to have recourse to the awful decision of arms, unless for the defence or preservation of their most valuable rights, are truths which every person of sense and humanity readily admits, and fondly cherishes. It is needless to employ much oratory in endeavouring to fix on the mind a strong abhorrence of war, by an affecting description of its horrors. These are, at present, sufficiently felt all over Europe, and none who have any pretensions to rationality or feeling, but must shudder on the review of the scenes of carnage and misery which this war has already produced. May God grant that the recollection of these may long remain in the minds of princes and statesmen, and, after the present contest is terminated by a general peace, long prevent the renewal of such an effusion of blood!

Notwithstanding these melancholy reflections, which are, more or less, applicable to every war,
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but particularly applicable to the present; yet, as long as human depravity exists, no other alternative may remain to an injured party, but vindication of right by an appeal to arms, or unconditional submission to a violent aggressor. In this case, all the calamities and all the guilt of war are chargeable, not on that state which defends, but on that which invades, *right*; especially if every thing has been done to obtain, by equitable discussion, that which is ultimately maintained by force.

Now, it is on this ground that we meet those who assert that the war might have been avoided by this country. Before we proceed, however, to the examination of the point in question, it may be proper to consider what is implied in the terms, *that the war might have been avoided*. Is it meant that Great Britain might, for some time, have remained a quiet spectator of the conquests of the French on the continent, and have, during that period, enjoyed a neutrality which, while it exempted us from the immediate calamities of war, was highly favorable to the ambitious and aggrandizing views of the enemy? I grant, that, in this sense, the war might have been *avoided*: but I contend, at the same time, that this tranquillity would, to us, have been the repose of a lethargy, which would have deprived us of all power of exertion, whenever it might be demanded for our own immediate preservation;

preservation ; and that this demand could not have been delayed beyond the period to which the French government might have chosen to limit it. If the meaning of the expression be, that, if the war had not been undertaken, we might, at this time, have enjoyed internal quiet and external security, and have also fulfilled our obligations to our allies, with whom we were connected by solemn treaties, existing long before the commencement of the present hostilities, and whose safety we were bound, by every consideration of interest and honour, to consult ; this is a very false representation of the case, and such as will not bear the slightest examination.

Mr. Erskine has, in his *celebrated* pamphlet, endeavoured to evince that the alarms of ministers, with respect to the introduction of French principles amongst us, were groundless ; that the measures taken to prevent their diffusion were both unnecessary and ineffectual, and that they tended only to irritate the French government, and to precipitate us into a war. That opinions can be successfully combated by argument only, or by an appeal to the hearts of mankind, is readily granted. But, when opinions are of that nature that pernicious action must be the speedy result ; and when the government of a neighbouring nation not only openly professes opinions hostile to every other established government, but also publicly communicates,

municates, to deputies from turbulent societies in another state, the most solemn marks of its approbation; it is certainly neither criminal, nor imprudent, for the rulers of that state to adopt such internal regulations as appear most conducive to its own security. With these no foreign power has any right to interfere. If it takes umbrage on this account, it assumes a control over other nations, incompatible with their independence; and if this umbrage manifests a hostile disposition, whatever insidious declarations may be made to the contrary, it is wise and just to take such measures of security, whether by drawing closer the ties of connection with foreign powers, or by placing the force of the country on the most respectable footing, as the necessity of the case may require.

Was our government to abstain from all such measures merely because they might give offence to the French? Were we to trust our security to their good graces, or to the continuance of any favourable opinion of us which they might entertain? Can any one be ignorant of the rapid vicissitudes to which the prevailing systems in France were subject, and of the sudden successions of ruling factions and leaders? The favourable sentiments of one party towards this country might, to another, have been a sufficient reason for adopting views of hostility. Will any man assert that the French character had totally changed since

the beginning of the revolution, that it had lost all its spirit of political intrigue, all its views of aggrandizement, all its hereditary jealousy and rivalry of Great Britain? When this character had acquired a greater facility of unfolding its energy, and of collecting its strength, was no apprehension to be entertained of it; and, after war had commenced between France and the coalesced continental powers, the issue of which might prove favourable to the former, would it have been wise to commit our safety to the certainty of always maintaining with her a friendly correspondence? Could any minister of this country have been justified in neglecting such measures as appeared at that time the most likely to prevent the French power from extending on the continent, and their revolutionary intrigues from operating in the heart of Great Britain? Such a false security, such humane plans of conciliation, and such magnanimous offers of establishing rational liberty in France, bear no analogy to that conduct which the French had adopted with regard to us, and, we are morally certain, they would have continued to pursue. They could not be ignorant that the government of this country could not relish the revolutionary principles which they were disseminating far and wide; and they could not but suspect, that sooner or later it might be necessary for us either to take an open share in the war, or, by an armed

neutrality, to dictate such a peace to the contending powers, as was most compatible with the interests of Great Britain. Is it to be supposed, or can any reflecting man suffer his imagination so far to delude him, as to think that the French would have remained idle, and not, by their emissaries sent to every part of the British dominions, have endeavoured to excite such troubles as would have effectually drawn off the attention of our government from foreign to domestic concerns? This is the natural channel in which things would have flowed; and it is no hazardous assertion, that we might have had, in this case, a revolution, in all its horrors, in our island. Was this dreadful probability to be committed to the decision of unforeseen events, and were no measures to be adopted which might effectually preclude it? It has hitherto been precluded by the war, which has prevented French emissaries from communicating, so extensively, their secret deadly poison, and has armed us at all points to withstand and repel every open attack.

It is not on this ground however that I mean to justify the war; for this was not the ground on which it was undertaken: the cause of the actual commencement, or rather of the repulsion of hostilities on the part of this country, was such as it was absolutely *impossible* to avoid.

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But, before I proceed to this point, I wish to make a few remarks on another of Mr. Erskine's assertions nearly connected with what I have just been stating. This assertion is, that if this country had taken no part in the confederacy against France, but had rather discountenanced it, the unfortunate Lewis the Sixteenth might have now been firmly seated on his throne, the beloved sovereign of a free and a happy people. This assertion is entirely gratuitous, and founded neither on the experience of history, nor on accurate knowledge of the state of France. After the impulse which the French nation had received from its first revolution, it is by no means probable that it would have remained within any bounds of moderation, but, particularly with its ardent character, much more supposable that it would have run the whole career of political phrenzy. All the effects, therefore, ascribed solely to the combination formed against France, might as easily have proceeded from her own internal agitations. There was no combination of princes against this country during the unhappy convulsions in the reign of Charles the First, and yet that monarch was beheaded, and a republic established. When Cromwell got possession of the government, he sought foreign war to occupy the restless minds of his countrymen; and the leaders of the republican faction in France, after having dethroned and murdered their monarch, would, for the same reason, have engaged their nation

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tion in some contest with their neighbours, if none had existed before; and Great Britain would, in all probability, have been the object on which they might have exercised their enterprise and their valour.

It is also a fact consistent with the knowledge of every person well acquainted with the internal state of France, for several years preceding the revolution, that among the philosophers and political speculators of that country, the desire of a republican government was warmly cherished. It cannot be believed that those men would have lost the opportunity, which the agitation of the public mind afforded them, for realizing their favourite project; and from the influence they had acquired, and were daily increasing, it is probable they would have affected it, whether their country had been involved in foreign hostility or not. When all this is considered, it will appear what credit is due to Mr. Erskine's Utopian speculations on this subject.

I now proceed to consider the immediate causes of our war with France, after having premised some observations relative to the hostilities between that country and the continental powers. Much has been written, and much more said, on the famous convention at Pilnitz. A copy of that convention, as founded on a partition-treaty, concluded

ed and signed at Pavia in July 1791, is produced in the New Annual Register for 1792. Before the censures which it so justly deserves, as calculated only to serve the purposes of the most unprincipled despotism, can be applied to the contrivers of it, it must be proved that it really existed. Of this partition-treaty no document whatever has been produced, and its reality rests wholly on the assertions of newspapers. The writers of the New Annual Register 1793 acknowledge that they had been much censured for inserting, in their preceding volume, the above-mentioned copy of it; and pretend to justify themselves on the vague grounds of its being held authentic by persons well versed in diplomatic affairs. For this we have only their own assertion, and, on the supposition of its truth, only the opinion of those persons whose skill in diplomatic affairs they esteemed. But whether this can be accounted a sufficient ground of historical truth, in a matter of such great importance, every judicious and reflecting man will determine. For any thing which the public knows to the contrary, that this treaty was fabricated at Paris to serve the purposes of party, is as likely, as that it really existed. The writers of the New Annual Register have also called upon the combined powers to *publish the real treaty*, as the fullest refutation of their misrepresentation of it, and thought themselves entitled to credit till it should be published. This is one of the most singular modes of defence that were ever adopted.

adopted. For, if the treaty never existed, how could it be published? and if some treaty embracing objects very different from those alleged, had been concluded, do the contracting parties immediately become bound to publish this to the world as soon as an anonymous writer thinks proper to charge them with the most odious designs? As well might it be maintained, in private life, that if any two persons enter into mutual engagements, which they think proper to keep secret, and a third, desirous of knowing the nature of the transaction, calumniates them in the grossest manner; on this account, they would in their own justification be obliged to disclose the whole of their agreement, which very laudable reasons might induce them to conceal, and that the accuser would not be bound to make good his charge, or to incur the penalties of a libel. It has also been asserted that Great Britain acceded to this supposed treaty; but as this assertion has been brought forward with more appearance of hesitation, so it has been fully and publicly denied. The truth is, that no such treaty ever existed, which overturns all the declamation which the supposition of its existence has occasioned. But, although this non-existence could not be asserted, it was the business of those who argued from the supposition of this treaty, first to prove that it did exist; not the business of those whom they accused, to prove that it did not.

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After all, whatever credit may be given to the articles of the convention of Pilnitz, and to the treaty of Pavia, supposed to have preceded it, yet, while Great Britain took no share in the hostilities against France, neither the principles nor the conduct which these involved can, with any shadow of reason, be imputed to the government of this country.

In order to determine the exact merits of measures which have been adopted a considerable time before, and have drawn after them a series of momentous consequences, it is necessary to contemplate things, not as they stand before us at present, but in the aspect which they bore when such measures were adopted. Events beyond all probable conjecture, at any given time, ought no more to influence our judgment of past actions, than such as are still hid in the impenetrable darkness of futurity ought to affect our opinions of the present. There is, however, a propensity in mankind to consider themselves as having always possessed that knowledge which they have acquired by the gradual succession of events, and, while their understandings have been in a constant though imperceptible state of fluctuation, to ascribe to them uniformity and permanence of decision.

If we carry our thoughts backwards four or five years, and view the political complexion of things

things as they then stood, we shall acknowledge that the principles, the conduct, and the unbridled licentiousness of the French could not fail to disquiet and to alarm every regular government in Europe. Long before there was any appearance of combination against them, many acts of the most ferocious barbarity had been committed in France, without any attempt to restrain or punish. But let any man, at this day, consider the scenes of the 20th of June, of the 10th of August, and of the 2d of September 1792, and say if he can reflect on them without the deepest horror. Can any person review the open and professed abjuration of every religious principle without experiencing that aversion which, notwithstanding the ridicule thrown on such sentiments by unfeeling impiety, every good mind will ever entertain? *A combination of despots* is as odious to the writer of these pages, as it can be to any human being; and he knows none to whom these terms are so applicable as to the present government of France. But he will not suffer the *sound of these words*, even when applied to the absolute monarchies of the Continent, to suppress either the dictates of his judgment, or the feelings of his heart; and he will maintain that it was the duty of every man, who had the means, to endeavour to stop the progress of ferocity, cruelty, and savage emancipation from every humane and rational principle. He will maintain, that, as the
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desire of doing so was of all feelings the most natural, so the attempt was so far laudable. It has been again and again repeated, that it was not consistent with sound policy to interfere in French affairs, and would have been much wiser to have suffered that people, at all hazards, to become the prey of their contending factions, and, like the soldiers of Cadmus, to destroy one another by their own weapons. Is it not surprising, however, that while nothing but the calmest reason, or rather the most frigid policy, is required from the enemies of France, and every thing contrary to this stigmatized with the severest epithets, all the most barbarous excesses into which that nation has been hurried are constantly excused or palliated, on the ground of passion, which, though immoderately indulged, was yet natural in its origin? In the case of the latter, every plea of feeling, however savage in its operations, is readily admitted. In the case of the former, every the smallest deviation from the dictates of rigid reason, however conformable to the best sentiments of the human heart, is branded with the strongest marks of condemnation.

That no foreign nation has a right to interfere in the domestic transactions of another, whatever be their nature, has been frequently alleged; but it has been alleged with more boldness of assertion than with evidence of truth. For if the

immoderate power of any one state, or a decided spirit of ambition, can justify others in endeavouring to secure themselves against it; the same reason will be equally valid for endeavouring to put a stop to such a spirit of anarchy, and of savage cruelty, as threatens to extend its pernicious influence to every surrounding nation; and this, I believe, is admitted by all writers on the law of nature and of nations. If this is not merely probable; if sedition has been openly encouraged, and invitation given to the discontented of every other state to seek protection from the rulers of any one country; if solemn treaties have been directly violated; it will not surely be denied that neighbouring governments are entitled to consult their own security, by endeavouring to check the power by which such conduct has been adopted. That all this had happened in France, and that, in particular, the rights of the German Princes, in that country, confirmed by solemn treaties, had, long before the continental war, been destroyed, merely because the French nation thought it convenient to do so, cannot be called in question. For the last they indeed offered an indemnification, and afterwards gave some explanations of their other obnoxious proceedings, when it became necessary to diminish the alarm they had occasioned. But were other powers obliged to submit both their internal tranquillity and their external relations to the arbitrary decisions of the government of France,

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and to remain entirely dependent on the views of things which it might adopt, according as its interest or generosity might dictate? When the French were permitted to take such vigorous measures as their circumstances might prescribe to them, were all the other powers of Europe to have their hands tied up, and, for fear of exasperating them, to rely wholly on their benevolence? Whatever the partisans of every thing called French may decide on these subjects, no person of calm and impartial judgment can suppose that such pusillanimous submission was consistent either with prudence or with virtue. Let it also be remembered, that one of the articles of accusation against the unfortunate Queen of France was, "that she induced the King and the Assembly to declare war against Austria, contrary to every principle of sound policy, and the public welfare." This charge was false, as far as it applied to the Queen; but it shews that there was a time when the rulers of France themselves considered this declaration of war as ill-grounded and precipitate. In the act of accusation against the deputies of the Gironde party, who were tried on the 24th of October 1793, one charge also was "their having made war be declared, first against Austria, and afterwards against England and Holland;" so that, notwithstanding the justice which is in this view ascribed to the French by their English admirers, it is evident that even the

Jacobins themselves considered the guilt as wholly imputable to the leaders of the ruling faction in France, who advised and commenced the war.

I beg, however, it may be considered that I am not undertaking the defence of the continental powers which combined against France. All I mean to establish is, that all the principles on which they acted are not deserving of that unqualified censure with which they have been stigmatized. It is peculiar to party-spirit to condemn or applaud without discrimination, and not to adjust its condemnation or censure to the nature of objects, but to adjust the nature of objects to its own passions.

After all, the government of this country is little concerned in the sentiments that may be entertained with respect to the principles of the continental combination. Its conduct stands on very different grounds; and all that has hitherto been said on the motives by which the continental powers were influenced, only goes to prove that neither France has been so blameless, nor they so guilty, as the friends of republicanism are fain to suppose.

Let us now consider the causes of the war between Great Britain and France. The latter having declared hostilities against the King of Hungary and Bohemia, M. Chauvelin, minister plenipotentiary

potentiary of the King of the French, delivered to Lord Grenville, secretary of state for the department of foreign affairs, a memorial dated May the 12th, 1792. In this, after having explained the motives which induced France to declare and commence hostilities, and expressed his hope that these will appear satisfactory to the British government, he requires that, conformably to the treaty of navigation and commerce of the 26th of September 1786, his Britannic Majesty shall prohibit all the subjects of Great Britain and Ireland (and publish the order in the usual way through the two kingdoms, and the islands and countries dependent thereon) from committing any hostility against French ships at sea; and from taking out any patent, commission, or letters of reprisal from the different princes or states at war with France, or making use, in any way, of such patents or commissions. He also desires, in the name of the King of the French, that all the articles of the said treaty which have reference to the case of one of the contracting powers being at war, and particularly, articles third, sixteenth, fortieth, and forty-first, shall be punctually observed and executed, as the King of the French is, on his part, determined to do in all the stipulations of the said treaty.

In consequence of this note, the proclamation of the 25th of May of the same year was issued, strictly enjoining the prohibitions demanded, and enforcing

enforcing the stipulations referred to by M. Chauvelin.

On the 24th of the same month and year, another note was presented to Lord Grenville, by the same minister plenipotentiary, referring to the royal proclamation issued on the 21st, for the preventing of tumultuous meetings and seditious writings; and, on the supposition that some expressions in that proclamation appeared to give credit to the opinions which the enemies of France strove to propagate relative to the intentions of Great Britain, giving an explanation of the sentiments and principles of the French government, and requesting Lord Grenville to obtain his Britannic Majesty's permission to communicate that official note to the two houses of parliament, before they deliberated on the proclamation of the 21st of May.

In that proclamation no mention whatever was made of the French government, but general terms only were used. It was a matter entirely of domestic government, and no foreign ambassador had the smallest right to interfere. The proposal made by M. Chauvelin to lay his note before the two houses of parliament, if in any instance reduced to practice, would go to overturn all that part of our constitution which has vested, in his Majesty alone, the right of corresponding, by means
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of his ministers, with foreign powers, relative to the affairs of the kingdom, and by allowing foreign ambassadors to hold direct communication with the two houses of parliament, would entail on the nation all the evils of unqualified republicanism. It is evident that M. Chauvelin, animated by the political principles which his countrymen had adopted, and possessing all their cunning and subtlety, had made this attempt with a view to acquire greater influence over the counsels of this country; nor is it unlikely that he may have held previous consultation with some persons whose politics coincided with his own. But his Majesty's ministers rightly understood the nature of such official notes; and Lord Grenville, in his answer dated the 25th of May, wisely pointed out the impropriety of M. Chauvelin's requisition, and with politeness and moderation declined it. It is something singular that, while the French were declaring their strongest indignation against foreign powers for attempting to interfere in their revolution, which threatened to extend its convulsive influence to every neighbouring nation, they should in this manner, artful indeed and concealed from vulgar penetration, presume to take a step relative to this country, which might have drawn after it the subversion of an essential part of its constitution.

The French convention had, in November 1792, declared the navigation of the Scheldt to be open, in direct violation of the treaty of Westphalia, concluded in 1648, and of the rights which the Dutch had acquired by that treaty. The success of their arms in the Netherlands had inspired them with a degree of arrogance they had not hitherto assumed; disclosed to them views of aggrandizement and conquest they have ever since fondly cherished; and induced them to consider themselves as no longer contending merely for their own constitution, but as entitled to the right of dictating to prostrate Europe. It has been asserted that the Dutch were so far from requesting Great Britain to take any concern in the business of the Scheldt, that they viewed it as a matter of great indifference; and in order to shew the versatility of the politics of this country with regard to that object, it is stated in the New Annual Register 1792, that the British ambassador Sir Joseph York went purposely to Antwerp in 1786, to instigate the inhabitants of that city to insist on the free navigation of their river. Nothing can more clearly evince the ignorance of the writer by whose pen this assertion was committed to paper; since it is certain that Sir Joseph York (Lord Dover) left the Hague four years before that period, and never after acted in any diplomatic capacity. Equally groundless is the whole representation of the indifference of the Dutch to the opening

opening of the Scheldt. Both the government and the people loudly exclaimed against it, as an event the most fatal to their interests; and, what will appear very astonishing to those who assert facts without the smallest knowledge of the country in which they are said to have happened, the Anti-Stattholderian party was principally alarmed by the project of opening the Scheldt. The reason is obvious; Amsterdam, the chief seat of that party, would have been the principal sufferer. Can any thing prove, in a more convincing manner, the anxiety of the Dutch on this subject, than their having a few years before paid to the Emperor Joseph, eleven millions of florins, to prevent him from executing the project which the French convention had now declared their resolution to effectuate? It is a certain fact, that the States General, though prevented, by the proximity of the French to their territories, from making a public and official application, did nevertheless solicit the exertions of the British government for frustrating this design; that on this solicitation was founded Lord Auckland's assurance to them that his Britannic Majesty was both ready and determined to execute, with good faith, the treaty concluded between Great Britain, Holland, and Prussia, in 1788; and that this was absolutely necessary to give effect to any negotiations that might be set on foot for the purpose in view.

It was impossible for his Majesty and his ministers to remain indolent spectators of the progress of the French arms in the Netherlands, in Savoy, and in Germany, even although this had been accompanied with no violation of treaties, which this country was bound to see respected. This circumstance itself of the aggrandizement of France would, at any time, have been a sufficient reason for putting these realms in a respectable state of defence, for preventing the French from increasing their resources, and strengthening their credit by the circulation of their assignats, by the purchase of military stores in the British dominions, and by draining the country of those supplies of corn which, in the event of a war, might be so necessary to its own subsistence. This is a sufficient justification of some measures of security necessarily adopted at that time, which have been represented as infractions of the commercial treaty with France. How far this necessity was in the present case real, and not invented to serve the purpose of a moment, will be evident from reflecting that a faction marked with every feature of iniquity and barbarous ferocity, a faction which has been the object of execration to every honest heart, a faction which is now the abhorrence of Frenchmen themselves, but a faction whose blackest actions were then palliated, if not justified, by some English republicans,—from reflecting that the Jacobins had then seized on the government
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of France. The head and foul of this faction was the detestable Robespierre; and will any man have the boldness, at this day, to maintain that the government of this country had no just ground of alarm from the dominion of such a tyrant, in a neighbouring nation; no just reason for taking such measures of defence as might ensure our safety, when it should please him and his accomplices, in their wanton thirst of blood, to attack us? Ye who retain the feelings of human nature, who have any regard for virtue, any aversion from vice, any respect for the rights conferred by God on his rational creation, any sense of the yearnings of compassion which the heart of man will retain even in its lowest debasement, any recollection of what is due to the cries of distress, any reverence for conscience, for honor, for all that distinguishes man from the wolf and the tiger; say if it was possible for a human being to contemplate the infernal deeds of the savages who at that time governed and degraded France, and not to wish some security against their assaults; say if it was possible for a minister of Great Britain to abstain from placing his country in such a state, as would enable her to repel every attempt to destroy her liberties, to overturn her constitution, to wrest from her, her possessions—if it would not have been in the highest degree criminal to neglect any precaution necessary to this purpose? The Jacobins then possessed the supreme power of France; and

and to negotiations with the Jacobins our government was required to trust for security, without any measures of vigour which might demonstrate that we were able to resist them! The Jacobins are now abhorred in France, and the Jacobins were then to be courted and caressed by England!

The judicial murder of the French King, accompanied with peculiar circumstances of cruelty, had excited one unanimous burst of indignation over all Europe. The British nation, in particular, was affected with the strongest impressions of sympathy for the royal family of France, and of abhorrence of their blood-thirsty persecutors. When the news of the dismal catastrophe reached London, the public theatres, ready to begin their entertainments, were instantaneously shut, and every countenance was the picture of the deepest melancholy. An appeal is now made to the spontaneous feelings of the nation, at that period; and the reader is requested to lay his hand on his heart, and declare whether he did not participate the compassionate stirrings of humanity, and the glow of indignation; whether he could enter into the frigid and unfeeling arguments then used by many, and considered as mere declamation every thing that was then said on the wanton cruelty, the boundless ambition, the unprincipled politics, and the destructive system of the French demagogues? If, at that time, he really thought his country ran

no risk whatever from their secret machinations, or their open proceedings, with regard whether to ourselves or to our allies? Had we nothing else to do but to negotiate, and neglecting every preparation of defence, and every measure of security, to trust all that was dear to us to the good graces of our determined enemies, and to that conciliation which boundless concession might effectuate? Can it be denied that a member of the French executive council had addressed a letter to all the friends of liberty in our sea-ports, containing these words: “ The King of England and his parliament mean
 “ to make war against us. Will the English re-
 “ publicans suffer it? Already these free men
 “ shew their discontent, and the repugnance
 “ which they have to bear arms against their
 “ brothers the French. Well, we will fly to their
 “ succour—We will make a descent on the island
 “ —We will lodge there fifty thousand caps of
 “ liberty, and we will stretch out our arms to our
 “ republican brethren.—The tyranny of their go-
 “ vernment will soon be destroyed.”

To this letter, written by a member of the executive council, is opposed another from M. Condorcet, expressing an anxious desire of maintaining an amicable understanding and generous friendship with England. While the former is represented as devoid of public authenticity, because it proceeded from an individual, though a member

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of the executive council; the highest regard is claimed to the latter, as expressive of the sentiments of the whole French nation, though also written by an individual, of a public character much less important! It is unnecessary to insist on a mode of reasoning so evidently absurd, and unfair. Condorcet addressed a circular letter of the same kind to a great number of persons in the Dutch provinces, which, although conceived in the same insidious terms of amity which have characterised the conduct of the French whenever it served their ambitious and despotic purposes, had for its main object to sow dissension through the country, and to induce the inhabitants to desert their government.

It may also be proper to fix the reader's attention on one particular circumstance which happened about the beginning of December 1792; namely, that Dumourier had actually proposed to the executive council, to take possession of Maestricht, as necessary to his defending the Meuse, and the territory of Liege. It is true that the executive council rejected this proposal; but this rejection was, in all probability, occasioned by the vigorous steps which Great Britain had then begun to take; and if an excessive and pusillanimous dread of war had been observed in this country, there is good reason for believing that orders would have been issued for occupying that im-

portant place, without the smallest regard to the Dutch republic.

Still it is maintained there was no sufficient ground for going to war, and abandoning every means of negotiation. Neither was this required by the measures proposed to parliament in his Majesty's speech, delivered on the 28th of January 1793. All that was proposed was "an augmentation of our forces by sea and by land, and the adoption of such measures as were necessary in the present conjuncture, for maintaining the security and rights of his Majesty's own dominions, for the support of his allies, and for opposing the views of aggrandizement and ambition, on the part of France, dangerous at all times to the general interests of Europe, but peculiarly so, when connected with the propagation of principles which lead to the violation of the most sacred duties, and are utterly subversive of the peace and order of all civilized society."

It deserves particular attention that the principles above alluded to were not any longer propagated by speech and writing alone, but by force of arms; and were therefore no longer to be resisted by mere argumentation, but by the same instruments with which they were disseminated, whenever these instruments should be applied to this country,

or to those nations with which we were connected by the strictest bonds of alliance. Hitherto, however, no hostility existed between Great Britain and France; the road to negotiation was still open; and France herself precipitately barred it by her declaration of war against his Britannic Majesty and the Stadtholder. Before we proceed to consider this declaration of war, as containing the most convincing proof of all the hostile intentions, and all the pernicious plans of revolutionising both this country and Holland, imputed to the French, it will be proper to review the transaction with M. Chauvelin, which immediately preceded it.

In considering this transaction, two things are to be attended to: first, the acknowledgment or rejection of M. Chauvelin's capacity as ambassador of the French republic; and secondly, the explanations which that gentleman gave of the obnoxious decree of the 19th of November 1792, of the conduct of the French relative to the Scheldt, and of their general system with regard to the British nation.

As M. Chauvelin had been received as ambassador in this country, on his credentials from Lewis the Sixteenth, it is evident that he could not be acknowledged here in any other capacity, as long as he had no other credentials to produce. This defect was indeed supplied by those which he

received from the executive council, and notified to Lord Grenville in the official note dated Paris, January 4th, 1793; and which were formally rejected by that nobleman in his letter to M. Chauvelin of the 20th of the same month and year. In order to judge of the principles on which this rejection took place, it is proper to observe that it had been laid down by the government of this country as an invariable maxim, that France had no right to intermeddle with the domestic concerns of any other power, and had constantly maintained that this maxim had been religiously observed, by itself, with regard to France. At first view, the rejection of M. Chauvelin's credentials appears to contradict this profession: but, when accurately examined, it is in all respects that line of conduct which it dictated. To have acknowledged these credentials, implied a direct and avowed acknowledgment of the French republic, established, not by the spontaneous and unanimous consent of that nation, nor even by a decided majority, but by the violent usurpation of a party obtained by massacre and bloodshed unknown to a civilized age. To this government not only all the royalists, strictly so called, but all who adhered to the constitutions of 1789, 1790, and 1791, were hostile. The strength of the royalist party itself was clearly established by the long and bloody war of La Vendée; and at the time that the convention invested M. Chauvelin with the dignity of its ambassador,

bassador, it was very doubtful if the convention could subsist for half a year. The successes of the allies in the beginning of the following campaign, and the defection and subsequent plans of Dumourier, had very nearly accomplished their downfall in a much shorter period. Was it then the duty of the government of this country to contribute to the stability of the convention, by the recognition of their ambassador, by the consequent avowal of the legality of the destruction of the monarchy, and of the judicial murder of the monarch; and by an implied disapprobation of every other power which might refuse to adopt the same measure? The reader is again begged to transport himself, in idea, into the midst of circumstances as they stood at that time, and to consider all that has since happened as hid in the darkness of futurity. Let us suppose, for it was then a very supposable case, that the party which adhered to royalty in France had as completely triumphed over the republicans as these have triumphed over the royalists, and reflect in what light the government of this country would then have appeared to all Europe, if it had purchased a transitory peace with the convention by acknowledging the republic in the person of her ambassador. Pusillanimity and weakness would then have been imputed to the government of Great Britain, which might soon after have been involved in a war with the French monarchy,

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animated with all the fury of resentment, on account of the sanction granted to the atrocious deeds of the vanquished republicans. Our interest would then have been as much hurt as it appears to be at present, and our honour completely lost. Sound policy therefore conspired with every sentiment of honour and outraged humanity, in dictating such a conduct as implied no acknowledgment of any government in France, erected on the ruins of monarchy, till at least such government was established by the general acquiescence of the French nation, and by the general consent of the other States of Europe; and had acquired some appearance of solidity.

Although M. Chauvelin's diplomatic capacity was rejected, yet the door was not shut to such explanations on both sides as might tend to the preservation of peace. These explanations chiefly related to the obnoxious decree of the 19th of November, above mentioned; to the affair of the Scheldt, and to the conduct of France with regard to the allies of Great Britain. It is necessary to make some observations on each of these points, which will be found to be of much greater consequence than they appear at first sight, and they have been represented to be, by those who have indulged in the most virulent declamation against all the measures of government.

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1st, With respect to the decree; M. Chauvelin, in his note dated December the 17th, 1792, endeavours to explain it in such a manner, as made it applicable to those people who, after having acquired their liberty, might request the fraternity and assistance of the French republic, by a solemn and unequivocal expression of the general will; and declares that France not only ought, but wished to respect the independence of England, and of its allies, with whom it is not at war. This is further insisted upon in the official note of the executive council, dated January the 4th, 1793; a definition of sedition, as incompatible with the general will of a nation, is there given; and the case of the Dutch, when assisted by Henry the Fourth of France, and Elizabeth of England, is particularly instanced. But this is mere jargon, and nothing else. The real intention of the decree, not its ostensible appearance, must be sought. There cannot be a doubt in the mind of any sensible man, that the object of this decree was to hold out to the discontented of all nations a prospect of assistance from the French, whenever they should have acquired such a number of adherents as might by a little sophistry be interpreted into a majority of the people; to intimidate all the sovereigns of Europe with the dread of insurrections in their own dominions; and to procure to the ruling faction in France universal dominion. He who does not immediately recognize this object, must

must indeed be little acquainted with the French spirit of intrigue, and particularly with the spirit of Jacobinism; or he must wilfully shut his eyes. If the decree proceeded solely from a rash and intemperate burst of enthusiasm, why was it not repealed as soon as the alarm it excited in our government was so openly announced? Why did the executive council, after having declared it to be perhaps *unnecessary*, never take a single step to obtain its repeal, and simply content itself with putting upon it an interpretation, which both left the French at full liberty to reduce it to practice whenever it might serve their purpose, and tended to blind those who had not penetration sufficient to discover its real object? Were the decrees of the convention, like the laws of the Medes, irrevocable, whatever absurdity or injustice they might contain?

All that is said with respect to the Dutch, when assisted by Queen Elizabeth and Henry the Fourth of France, is not applicable to the case. These sovereigns might be convinced that the Dutch were oppressed, and might on that account stretch to them the arm of relief: they might have done so from political motives only. These are singular cases in which it may be proper and justifiable to depart from general rules. But here is a comprehensive decree, offering fraternity and assistance in the name of the French nation, not to any particular

particular people, which they knew to be groaning under oppression, but to all those who *wished* to procure liberty—a word to be understood in the sense then assigned to it by the convention, namely, a republican government—and charging the executive power to send orders to the generals to give assistance to such people as had suffered, or were then suffering, in that cause. Here is a decree, of which no modification or softening interpretation was ever given by the convention itself, and of which the only explanation ever attempted to be given was in the above-stated official note of the executive council, which might be disavowed by the convention whenever it thought proper. What right had their constitution ever vested in the executive council to explain and modify the decrees of the convention, and what assurance had any foreign power that, while the council was doing so, its members might not be subjecting their heads to the guillotine? According to their principles, the convention alone could deliver the right sense and meaning of its own decrees.

But this sense is best understood by the uniform conduct which the French government had adopted, and still continues to pursue, in this respect, whenever its interest seems to demand it. Long before the war, that government employed emissaries both in this country and in Holland, particularly

particularly in the latter, to encourage and foment a spirit of sedition. A constant correspondence was maintained between the Dutch emigrants in France, and their friends in the Seven Provinces. These emigrants received pensions from the French government ever since the year 1787, and a very considerable body of them was in the French army before war was declared against the Stadtholder. It was chiefly at their instigation that the conquest of Holland was resolved on, and from them Dumourier derived his principal information. Thus, while the French laid it down as their principal ground of war against the King of Hungary and Bohemia, that he encouraged the French emigrants, and permitted them to arm in his dominions,; they themselves had long maintained in their pay, a large body of the same description of men, who had never failed to carry on a secret and treasonable correspondence against the government of their country.

2dly, Some observations have been already made relative to the affair of the Scheldt, by which it has appeared that the Dutch nation, as well as its government, considered it as a matter of the highest importance to them. It is now proper further to reflect, that the Dutch were proprietors of both banks of that river, from its mouth up to the territory of Antwerp. Hence, as far as related to the disputed navigation, it was as much their property

perty as the Tagus is of the Portuguese, or the Thames of the English. For the security of this property, guaranteed to them by solemn treaty, they had the fort of Lille on the northern, and that of Liefkenshoek on the southern bank of the Scheldt, and guardships constantly stationed before both.

To carry into execution the decree by which both the right of property and the solemn stipulations of a treaty were violated, the French convention, at the very time it was declaring its respect for the rights of neutral nations, fitted out an armed vessel at Dunkirk, and ordered her commander to sail up to Antwerp, bidding open defiance to the Dutch guardships. This commander was a man who had been banished from his country, by a judicial sentence, for the commission of a crime, and was appointed to this office, that the insult might be marked with every circumstance of contempt. He notified his orders to the States General, and immediately carried them into execution, notwithstanding the remonstrances of the Dutch officers. To avoid commencing hostilities, the States General ordered them not to oppose force to force, but only to protest against the whole proceeding.

After all this, how frivolous is every explanation of this violent act; and how arrogant and pernicious

nicious the vindication of it, on the ground of the rights of nature, in opposition to the law of nations! By such appeal to natural rights which in a hundred cases are susceptible of every interpretation that the law of force may be pleased to give them, all the treaties by which territory has been alienated, or any natural advantage relinquished, for two hundred years backward, were subjected to the revival of the French convention, which, with the code of nature in its hand, or of its own arbitrary will, to it of all things the most *natural*, might at once annul and set them aside. By the same right and the same power, the French might declare the passage of the Sound free to all nations, and deprive his Danish Majesty of the revenue derived from the tolls. By the same right and the same power, they might declare that the duties exacted from foreigners in the ports of Great Britain, and particularly the whole of the *navigation act*, which has given so much umbrage to foreign nations, are contrary to the law of nature, and ought therefore to be abolished. By the same right and the same power, all treaties whatever might be declared entirely useless, since it is the uniform object of these treaties to circumscribe natural rights, and to determine the enjoyment of them, by those particular circumstances which dictate the specific agreement. By the same right and the same power, if that power shall pass from the French

into other hands, all the treaties which they have concluded with vanquished enemies might be declared inconsistent with the rights of nature, and founded wholly on conquest, which is the law of violence. In a word, it was the tendency of the principle laid down and publicly sanctioned by the convention, to introduce endless anarchy and confusion into the established relations of all the States of Europe, and to produce, on a still more extensive scale, the disorder which has so dreadfully desolated France. A disorder this, infinitely worse than any which might result from any single aggression however great, or any single crime however detestable, proceeding from the impulse of irregular passion, and not from systematic inference, because this principle supplied an inexhaustible fountain from which the increasing stream of violence and injustice might flow through all the regions of the world. The profession and maintenance of this principle implied a justification, not of the present aggression only, but of every other which, by the distortions of sophistry, might in all time coming be deduced from it. Such a principle could never, either tacitly or directly, be admitted by our government, and such conduct as it dictated could never be permitted, as long as that government possessed any power of resistance. Viewed in this connection, the professions of respect for the allies of Great Britain were either unmeaning

unmeaning words, or a solemn mockery of the understandings that directed and of the energy that executed our counsels. It was therefore the indispensable duty of his Majesty's ministers to prove that, as they clearly perceived the sophistry which attempted to impose on them, so they possessed the means of resisting the injustice which was palliated in so flimsy a manner.

3dly, The ridiculous explanations, first given by M. Chauvelin, and afterwards repeated by the executive council, were, by the former, connected with an implied threat to appeal from the government to the English nation; and by the latter, with a positive declaration that, if these explanations were not satisfactory, and preparations continued in the ports of England, they would prepare for war, and combat the English with regret, but without fear. Thus, before M. Chauvelin was dismissed, and while explanations were still going on, the ultimatum of the French was delivered, and, in the event of its not being accepted, a *declaration of war* formally announced.

The only additional circumstance stated in the note of the executive council, was the offer of France to allow the Belgians, when they should be in possession of their liberty, to treat with the Dutch on the subject of the Scheldt; thereby main-
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taining that the treaty, by which its navigation was shut, and all the rights founded upon it, had fallen to the ground. This was exactly the matter in dispute; and the method which the French government adopted for negotiating with regard to it was, to hold it as indisputable, and to declare war if its arbitrary decrees were not immediately complied with. After such a declaration, was our government to crouch under the lifted arm of the French, and to grant to their threats, what had not been conceded to their flimsy explanations? To such a condition Great Britain never has been reduced, and, I trust, never will be, notwithstanding the eager wishes of many to bring us under the Gallic yoke, for the sake of Gallic principles. After the threat of M. Chauvelin to appeal from the government to the people of England, that is, to those among the people who were attached to the revolutionary system of France, and after the death of the French King had shewn that the ruling faction in that country had resolved on the most desperate measures, would it have been safe to allow that gentleman to remain in this kingdom as their secret agent, rendered doubly dangerous by the refusal of admitting him as their public one? He was therefore wisely and justly ordered to quit the British territories. This dismissal of M. Chauvelin has, of late, been compared with that of Lord Malmesbury from Paris. But, notwithstanding all the moderation and huma-

nity so constantly ascribed by Mr. Erskine to the rulers of France, there is not the smallest parallel between the two cases, although it is very probable that the insolence with which Lord Malmesbury was dismissed, originated, in part at least, in the desire of retaliation. If this be true, the inclination of the French to stop the further effusion of human blood, and to restore peace to Europe, will be easily ascertained, when the gratification of a vindictive spirit is put in competition with such grand and desirable objects. Even this disposition appears to have met with applause by the comparison between Lord Malmesbury's and M. Chauvelin's dismissal, which has been stated with such an air of triumph. There is however this important difference between the cases, that M. Chauvelin, when he was ordered to leave this kingdom, was not acknowledged in any official capacity, and sent away only as a private individual; but Lord Malmesbury had been received as his Britannic Majesty's ambassador, and was acknowledged as such, at the moment he was treated with so much indignity.

We next proceed to the French declaration of war, which soon followed the departure of M. Chauvelin from this country. The principle on which the French had uniformly and insidiously acted, was that of separating from their government the people of every country with which they deemed it expedient to wage war; the old maxim
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of conquerors, "*divide & impera.*" While they affected to consider the granting protection to emigrants as the greatest outrage offered to themselves, they were constantly linking their own interests with those of the disaffected in every other nation. Never did the old court of France, with all its subtlety and craft, adopt a more deceitful proceeding, or one in more direct opposition to every principle which they publicly avowed. The man who can reconcile to his honest feelings such destructive duplicity, is possessed of a frame of soul of which I can form no conception.

This insidious policy was remarkably displayed in the peculiar terms in which the declaration of war, now under consideration, was expressed. Hostilities were proclaimed against the King and his ministers only, and the greatest good-will professed towards those who might favour the French cause, in opposition to the executive government. The same policy was observed in the declaration against the Stadtholder. No mention was made of the States General, the sole representative of the Dutch nation, with respect to foreign powers, against whom every declaration of war had hitherto been made. In the United Provinces, this artful system was expected to produce much greater effects than even in Great Britain. As the French had maintained an uninterrupted correspondence with

with the Anti- Stadtholderian party; so, after they had proclaimed the Stadtholder the sole object of their hostilities, they spread through that country, by means of their emissaries, that they were not enemies of the republic, but only designed to restore it to its liberties. This game of adopting the interests of a faction, the French government, under the monarchy, had frequently played before with success; and, whatever fond ideas some misguided people may entertain on this head, the present French government is only the old in a new dress. It has the same soul, though it has assumed a different corporeal figure.

*Sunt quibus in plures jus est transire figuras
 Ut tibi complexi terram maris incola Proteu!
 Nam modo te juvenem, modo te videre leonem,
 Nunc violentus aper; nunc quem tetigisse timerent,
 Anguis eras.—*

It is astonishing that this consideration has not, long before this time, struck every person of the smallest discernment, that the sole object of the French is to extend their own power and dominion, under the appearance of favouring one party in every country which they wish to subdue. The excellence of the British constitution, uniting all the advantages of monarchical vigour with popular liberty, had hitherto prevented them from employing this policy with as much success in this as in some other countries. It has often, besides,

been remarked, to the honour of the British character, that whatever differences might subsist between contending parties among us, they were always compromised by foreign hostility. This was strikingly illustrated in an emblematic representation of this part of our character exhibited by Lord Stair, when he was ambassador at Paris. The French nobility having, on a particular occasion, observed that the English were constantly agitated by the spirit of party, his Lordship confessed the truth of the observation, but informed them at the same time that they were as constantly united by the interference of any foreign power in their domestic quarrels. He invited them next day to an entertainment, in which he said he would afford them a very striking representation of the spirit of his countrymen. He brought them into a large open court, in which two bull-dogs were fighting with great fury : soon after, a bull was let in, and the dogs, quitting each other, fell upon the common enemy with such violence, that they soon reduced him. " Now, gentlemen," says Lord Stair, " this is an exact picture of the English, who never fail to compromise their differences, whenever your nation thinks proper to attack them."

This is not, however, any longer the case. One unhappy consequence of the American war, among
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many others, has been an attachment to a foreign power, whenever it is considered as a means of advancing the interest of party. This very circumstance, if it is not allowed to give place to the genuine British spirit of our ancestors, will sooner or later prove the certain ruin of this country.

To return from this short digression : When his Majesty's ministers dismissed M. Chauvelin, in consequence of the just system which they had adopted, they relinquished not the use of every means which might prevent the calamities of war. It is true they also refused to treat with M. Maret, who was sent over to this country by the executive council, and arrived at the moment M. Chauvelin was preparing to depart. Some hireling or partial writers have asserted that Maret was empowered to give up the navigation of the Scheldt, to propose the revocation of the obnoxious decree of the 19th of November, and to offer the annexation of the Austrian Netherlands to the Dutch republic, and the cession of some of the most valuable French West India islands to this country. For this we have no other authority but the assertion of these writers, which bears the strongest internal marks of misrepresentation. For, in the first place, after the marked obstinacy of the executive council with regard to the obnoxious decree and the affair of the Scheldt, it is highly improbable that it would

all of a sudden have relinquished both. In the second place, as these were the main points in dispute, it is ridiculous to suppose, that, after consenting to give them up, the French government would, without any motive whatever, have added the magnificent concessions of the Netherlands, and of the West India islands. In the third place, the offer regarding the Netherlands could not be accepted by this country without breaking with the Emperor, and exposing Holland to a war on that account. But it is needless to reason on suppositions of which no document was ever produced.

Our government, however, authorized Lord Auckland to treat with Dumourier; but, before any thing could be done, the French system again altered, and Dumourier commenced hostilities against the Dutch by besieging Breda. The Dutch government immediately applied for the succours to which they were entitled by the triple alliance of 1787, and the great majority of that nation expected them with the most anxious impatience. On the arrival of the guards in Holland, the hostilities between Great Britain and France commenced, which have continued ever since.

As soon as we were involved in the war, it became necessary to contract those engagements with
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the allied powers on the continent, which might most effectually contribute to the annoyance of the common enemy. In order to concert a joint plan of operations, it behoved us to accommodate our measures to theirs, in such a manner as neither to render them lukewarm in the cause, nor to induce them to weaken the alliance by separate treaties with the enemy. This was perhaps the reason, and a very strong one it was, why some opportunities of an advantageous, but separate, peace for this country, especially after the surrender of Valenciennes and other frontier towns of France, were not seized. Indeed, if the conduct of the King of Prussia, and even some proceedings of the Imperial court, during the campaign of 1794, could have been foreseen, it might have been politic in us to have availed ourselves of our circumstances for concluding a peace to our advantage, and to their detriment. But the supposition of treachery can never furnish any data for political calculation, especially if every rational motive conspire to make an ally fulfil his engagements. After the French had got possession, not only of all the Austrian Netherlands, but also of Holland, redoubled efforts became necessary for checking their destructive career—a necessity that continues in full force at the present moment.

In the course of this deduction, it has appeared that, strictly speaking, the French were the aggressors

gressors even with regard to the continental powers; that, in whatever light this point be considered, whether these powers rashly or iniquitously engaged in the war with France, or might with safety and justice have avoided it, this has nothing to do with the causes of our quarrel with that country; that it was the interest and the object of the French republicans to involve every other nation of Europe in intestine commotions, in order to remove all obstruction to their pernicious system; that the decree of the convention, promising fraternity and assistance to all people who wished to be free, was the open and avowed annunciation of this system, and comprehended much more than appeared to be expressed; that the decree respecting the Scheldt was a direct violation of the rights of our allies, and an indirect claim set up by the French government to bring before its arbitrary and usurped tribunal every treaty concluded in Europe; that in such a situation of public affairs, it would have been a most shameful violation of public trust for ministry to have omitted to put the national force on the most respectable footing, and to take the most vigorous measures of security; that the strictest orders were issued by his Majesty to all his subjects, to observe the most inviolable neutrality, when he was required to do so by the ambassador of the King of the French; that to have acknowledged M. Chauvelin's credentials from the
 executive

executive council, after the deposition, and much more after the death of that monarch, would have been a direct interference in the internal government of France, which ours wisely professed to avoid; that the declaration of war on the part of the French, was not provoked by any aggression from this country, but proceeded solely from the desire of attacking us before we were fully prepared for defence; that, even after this declaration of war, his Majesty's ministers attempted, through the medium of Lord Auckland, to negotiate, in order, if possible, to ward off the calamities which were likely to ensue, which might thus have been done without any avowed acknowledgment or denial of the French republic; that this negotiation was frustrated by Dumourier's precipitate and unprovoked attack of Holland; that we were bound, both by treaty and by common interest, to fly to the assistance of that country; and that to this, and to this alone, the *commencement* of our present war with France is to be referred. It has further appeared, that, after war was unavoidable, it became necessary for us to form closer connections with the continental powers combined against France, and thus to adapt our councils and measures in some degree to theirs; and that opportunities of advantageous terms to this country could not have been embraced, but by a dereliction of our allies, implying all the blame

which has been imputed to the King of Prussia.

In all this we behold one uniform and rational system pursued, which clearly dictated many of those steps represented, by partial accusers, as proceeding from folly or from wickedness, and readily referred by superficial observers to these sources.

It may be proper to add, that, in the prosecution of a long and complicated war, in conjunction with allies, emergent circumstances may, and must, occasionally, suggest particular modes of action, as conducive to the great end of annoying or embarrassing the enemy, which may at first appear repugnant to the general principle on which the war was commenced. Thus, although it was the maxim of our administration not to intermeddle in the internal affairs of France, yet, when the ruling powers of that country had proclaimed hostilities against us, they from that moment connected our interest with that of all their other enemies, and particularly of the royalists, and obliged us to avail ourselves of every means in our power for their annoyance, and our own success. Many obligations, perfectly valid in peace, are dissolved by a state of war; and, if it were at all necessary, this might be proved by the opinions of all the best writers on the law of nature and nations.

Let

Let any man of common sense, whose judgment is not strangely warped by the prejudices and the interests of party, or perverted by speculative notions of government, which he wishes to see realized, let him attentively consider what has been said on the whole of this subject, and see if he can pronounce that Great Britain has been precipitated into the present war with malignant intention, with flagrant injustice, and without the smallest ground of necessity. If there is truth and reality in what has been laid before the reader, it follows that all the virulent declamation, with which the most odious motives and the most flagitious conduct have, with respect to the contest in which we are engaged with France, been imputed to his Majesty's ministers, originates either in a most intemperate spirit of party, wishing, at every expence, to overthrow the present administration, or in a determined adherence to republicanism, justifying the French for no other reason but because they are republicans, and desiring the establishment of a similar form of government on the ruins of the British constitution.

I have hitherto said nothing of the last negotiation for peace, the termination of which so strongly evinced both the iniquity, unprincipled ambition, and deep-rooted hostility to this country, on the part of the enemy; and on the part of his Majesty and his administration, the sincerest

desire of concluding peace, the greatest candour in proposing the conditions of it, and complete moderation in conceiving them. Of all this the most authentic documents have, by the King's command, been laid before both Houses of Parliament, and communicated to the whole nation through the channel of the newspapers. These documents speak for themselves, and fully substantiate every inference drawn from them, in his Majesty's just and spirited Declaration by which the publication of them was preceded. Indeed, this appears to carry along with it such powerful evidence of truth, that no serious opposition was made to the firm, decided, and magnanimous address adopted conjunctly by Lords and Commons; and, as far as the writer of these pages has been able to learn, not a single person has hitherto attempted to justify this last proceeding of the enemy. Although this infamous conduct of the French government has deprived this country and its own of the immediate blessings of peace, and extended the calamities of war to a period of which the duration is still hid in the darkness of futurity, it has nevertheless conferred on us a benefit which it never intended to bestow, and the greatness of which it will probably appreciate by its effects on our defence, and on the defeat of its ambitious and tyrannical views, namely, a nearer approach to unanimity than this country has known since the commencement of the war. This is a

real and substantial blessing; for on it chiefly depend the maintenance of that rank and character which we have hitherto held among the nations, the security of our rights and privileges, both civil and religious, and the preservation of all that is dear to us as men and as Christians.

I have already considered the causes of the war, and proved, as it appears to me, to the satisfaction of every impartial and discerning person, that the aggression lay with the French, and not with our government. This was true previously to the departure of Lord Malmesbury on the late negotiation at Lisle; and that negotiation was therefore a striking proof both of our desire of peace and of our inclination to conclude it, not only on equitable, but on the most moderate conditions. If any blame attaches to the negotiation, it is not, in the opinion of many sensible and pacific men, on account either of the manner of conducting it, or of the articles which it proposed to establish, but of the degree of condescension which it displayed on the part of this country, by which its honour, and, perhaps, its interest appeared to be committed. Of this however, the peculiar complexion and circumstances of the times may afford a sufficient justification.

But there are some remarks and inferences suggested by the termination of this last endeavour

to obtain peace, which are of the first consequence.

It is a maxim generally acknowledged, that when, either between individuals or nations, a contest has taken place, founded on one side on such *specious* grounds as might have induced a person of common sagacity and integrity to believe that he had a just cause, even although it should afterwards turn out that there was some flaw in it, which he did not perceive at the outset, the blame passes from him to his antagonist, the moment that the former offers to compromise the matter, on such equitable terms as are conformable to their relative situations. Laying this down as a principle, which will not surely be contested, we contend that, whatever may have been any person's sentiments with respect either to the justice or necessity of the war in the beginning, he must at any rate concur in reprobating the late conduct of the enemy, and in supporting the cause of Great Britain as it stands at this moment.

What has been already said, has proved at least that our government had against France something more than a *specious*, by which I understand an *apparently just*, cause of war; such a cause as men of unimpeachable integrity and of good sense might have esteemed *just*. The majority of the nation certainly did think it *just* in the beginning; and

and it would surely be a judgment equally precipitate and severe, to pronounce that all who were of this opinion, were either rogues or idiots. Such then being the case, the offer of terminating it on such conditions as greatly exceeded every claim which the enemy, from the situation of France and Great Britain with respect to each other at the time of proposing them, was entitled to bring forward, and the solemn renewal of this offer in his Majesty's declaration, must render the French government, which insolently rejected this offer, and accompanied the rejection with the most glaring marks of insult, responsible for all the calamities ensuing on the continuance of the war. Even in the eyes of those who thought we might have avoided it in the beginning, we must now be considered as defending our undoubted rights, and as repelling a most iniquitous and inveterate enemy.

The injustice and unbounded ambition which the French government has so lately displayed, affords a strong presumption of their hostile dispositions towards this country, from the first period of their republican constitution. I am now arguing from this circumstance, not as if I entertained the smallest doubt of this disposition, since the preceding pages have fully evinced my persuasion on this subject, and the ample grounds on which it rests. This argument is used only as applicable

applicable to those whose opinion has hitherto been opposite to that which I have maintained ; and whom it ought to convince that this former opinion was erroneous. The rivalry of the two nations has existed for many centuries, and so strong was this principle, in both countries, that it formed a leading feature of national character. But what was under the French monarchy, a dictate of policy or an impulse of character, was changed by the republic into a fixed and implacable antipathy, a spirit satisfied with nothing short of the complete overthrow and destruction of its object. Of this several reasons may be assigned. To those who are tolerably acquainted with the views of the French philosophers long before the revolution of that country, it is not doubtful that they fondly cherished the idea of forming France into a republic, whose dominion should be universal over Europe ; if not by acquiring absolute possession of every European State, at least, by such a degree of power and influence as would bid defiance to every attempt to check and restrain her. No power stood so much in the way of such a plan, whether from natural jealousy, from habitual opposition, or from formidable resources, as Great Britain. With those therefore who cherished those ideas of gigantic ambition, it must always have been a primary object to reduce her to the lowest state of debility. When France extended her conquests, on every side, on the continent, it would have

have been incompatible with every dictate of sound policy, nay, of self-preservation, for this country to have remained an indolent spectator of such an alarming scene; and if it had not before taken any share in the war, it must, at that period, have been driven into it by the boundless ambition of that republic. Her conduct towards the neutral States, even those which courted her favour with an obsequiousness already expressive of dependence, in the last striking instance towards Venice, and as far as her power reaches towards America, is a convincing proof that the most scrupulous neutrality was no safeguard against her rapacity and violence. If this country, therefore, had endeavoured to persevere in the neutral system on the same principles, either of excessive fear or of commercial interest, by which other States have been actuated, it amounts to a certainty that it must, as has been already observed, have been attacked at a time when it might have been very insufficiently prepared for resistance.

There is another reason why the French republic must be hostile to this country, as long as it preserves its present happy constitution of government. She arrogates to herself the insolent, but groundless pretension of being exclusively possessed of that system of polity which preserves the inherent rights of man, maintains that true *equality* which constitutes the essence of justice, unites the
greatest

greatest energy and vigour with the most enlarged principles of liberty ; and exalts mankind to the highest pitch of national felicity. Every other form of government she outrageously stigmatizes with the name of *monarchical* or *aristocratical* despotism ; and while she exhibits the most odious picture of tyranny that was ever beheld or imagined, insidiously invests herself with the engaging appearance of freedom. The practical refutation of these pretensions is most strikingly seen and experienced in the British constitution, which confers more real liberty on those who have the happiness to live under it, than it ever entered into the hearts of the frantic votaries of the French republic to conceive ; which wards off those calamities which she pours in torrents on all who come within her pestilential influence ; and in one day bestows more blessings on the inhabitants of this country, than years of the mildest form of her tyranny could gradually collect. As long, therefore, as the British constitution stands, it must be a *standing* proof that there is, at least, one description and form of monarchy which, in respect of the principles of genuine liberty, of the security of *substantial*, not *visionary* right, of all the sources of public and private happiness, as much surpasses her baseless and crumbling constitution, as a solid, stately, and well-proportioned edifice does the temporary shed, composed of painted boards, for the celebration of some occasional festivity.

festivity. That she may make, therefore, some tolerable appearance in the world, when mankind return to the complete use of their senses, this contrast must be removed as soon as possible, and the British government swept from the face of the earth.

Absolute monarchies she can easily endure ; for in them she can always find some ground for her unceasing exclamations against despotism. But the limited and happily-constituted monarchy of Great Britain cannot co-exist with her affectation of liberty, and her real exercise of the most intolerable tyranny that ever oppressed mankind. The British government exhibits no instances of sixty persons, members of his Majesty's privy council, and of both houses of parliament, arrested in one night, put into covered waggons, and, without form of trial, sentenced to transportation beyond the seas, without even the melancholy consolation of knowing the place of their banishment and slavery, merely because they have displeased three usurpers who have trampled on their country and violated every law both human and divine. This is a sufficient reason for detesting and attempting to destroy a government which is a lasting reproach on all the impudent pretensions and all the odious crimes of the present rulers of France. As infidels, therefore, are much more favourable to the corruptest forms of Christianity, which afford some ground for their attacks, than

to its primitive and beautiful simplicity, which is able to withstand their most artful and virulent opposition; so the French tyrants are more furious against the British than any other form of government, because its practical effects have a tendency to explode their metaphysical systems of political administration, whose consequences are so destructive to all that is valuable in society. The energy which our government admits and inspires, by combining the wisdom of the few with the general attachment and co-operation of the people, opposes a more powerful barrier to French oppression and cruelty, than any other European State. On all these accounts, it is not surprising that the tyrannical rulers of France should conceive the most malignant antipathy to Great Britain, and be actuated in particular by the determined intention of overturning her constitution, and snatching from her all the sources of her internal prosperity, and of her external influence and power.

As such are the principles by which the French government is naturally actuated, so its continental victories have inspired it with the delirious hope of being able to accomplish its designs. Its declaration, therefore, that the French republic and the British government cannot exist together, is not to be considered as the unmeaning ejaculation of rage, but as the expression of deliberate system, destitute indeed of every rational principle, but directed to

one

one fixed and determined object. Nor ought we to suppose that the sentence of destruction pronounced against what is called by the enemy the *modern Carthage*, is only intended to alarm us, without any serious intention of carrying it into execution: it must be held as a deliberate purpose, which nothing will alter but the experience of its impossibility, and of the overthrow of the malignity from which it flows.

Now, if the cause in which we are at present engaged is not *just*, I beg to be favoured with an instance to which that epithet is applicable. If a war is not *just*, which has for its object the defence of our dearest rights, both civil and religious, our national independence, nay, our preservation itself, justice is only to be ascribed to those who indulge a boundless ambition, and trample under foot every civil and religious obligation. If that war is not *necessary*, on our part, into which we are driven by the vindictive spirit and inveterate hostility of our opponents; no defence, no maintenance of the most sacred rights, no effort of self-preservation can ever be denominated *necessary*, no repulsion of unjust and rapacious violence can be called *unavoidable*. The only alternative which is now left to the British nation, is either to submit unconditionally to the rulers of France, to abandon every dictate of interest, of honour, and of duty, and to bend its neck to

the most ignoble yoke; or to resolve on the most manly, spirited, and determined resistance, and on every sacrifice necessary to this end, and firmly to persevere in the contest, till final triumph shall, by the blessing of God, establish its just cause, or complete overthrow shall, by his tremendous appointment, subject it to its implacable foe. In such circumstances, he *that is not with us, is against us*. Whoever justifies the enemy, whoever exerts his invention to find excuses and palliatives for his conduct, whoever is lukewarm in his country's cause, nay, whoever is not willing to make the greatest sacrifices for its defence and preservation, is unworthy of the name of Briton, and cherishes treason in his soul. That spirit of party, or those particular views of politics, which in cases of smaller moment may be pleaded in excuse of error, or even in alleviation of criminality, can never be admitted to palliate the smallest favour to a few whose professed and proclaimed object is the overthrow of our constitution, our laws, and our liberties, and the complete destruction of that country which should be dearer to us than our lives.

2dly, Has the war been hitherto conducted with as much success as could reasonably have been expected?

The success of the war, so far at least as the British arms have been alone concerned, is so evident

evident and conspicuous, that nothing more appears necessary than a short sketch of its progress.

The first campaign, that of 1793, was uncommonly successful for the allies. The French were defeated in the battles of Aldenhoven, Neerwinden, Famars, and Cæsar's Camp; constrained not only to desist from their enterprise upon Holland, but to evacuate the whole of the Austrian Netherlands. Valenciennes, Condé, Mentz, and Quesnoy were taken. Here, however, the successes of the allies seem to have terminated, owing principally to the divisions among the allied generals, which led to the unfortunate affair of Dunkirk, and all the bad consequences with which it was attended. On the Rhine, however, the formidable lines of the French at Weissemburg were carried by General Wurmser; and Fort Vauban also fell into his hands. If we survey the whole of this campaign, it will be found that much more was accomplished in it than could have been expected. Not only Holland was saved, and the Austrian Netherlands recovered from the enemy, but a passage was also opened into the heart of France.

The succeeding campaign of 1794 was opened with the most brilliant success, by the defeat of the French on the 18th of April, and by the surrender of Landrecy which immediately followed. If the allied

allied army had laid siege to Cambray, which must soon have fallen, marched directly to Paris, relinquished at the same time all pretensions to the conquest of France, or of any of her provinces, and declared for a limited monarchy, it is most probable that the reign of the convention would speedily have terminated, a happier order of things would long since have been established in France, and peace been restored to Europe. But the Emperor, alarmed for his own dominions, threatened by the irruption of Pichegru into West Flanders, ordered his army to measure back its steps.—A series of disasters succeeded—Discord spread her baleful influence among the allies—the French recovered possession of all the Austrian Netherlands—reduced all the Dutch frontier—and, in January 1795, completely subdued the Seven Provinces themselves. The retreat, however, of the English army from Holland, before an enemy infinitely superior in numbers, and flushed with such continued and distinguished success, still redounds to the honour of the British arms. Soon after our troops were withdrawn from the continent, and since that period, our government wisely confined our continental exertions to the pecuniary assistance afforded to the Emperor.

That great errors were committed by the allies; that their mutual jealousies were among the chief causes of their disasters; that our troops did not
always

always observe the strictest discipline, and became thereby obnoxious to the people through whose country they passed; that the Dutch shamefully neglected every measure necessary for their own defence, and that the Stadtholderian party was completely deluded by the hopes of a separate peace, productive of no alteration in their government, which had been artfully held up to them by their enemies—all this is readily granted, and is a subject of the deepest regret. The defection of the King of Prussia, and the unhappy partition of Poland, were productive of the worst consequences to the allied cause. But it ought at the same time to be considered, that most of these events could not be foreseen or prevented. For, although the generality of mankind is extremely prone to require from statesmen a degree of sagacity which exceeds the limits of the human faculties, yet, by being engaged in the direction of the most complicated and multifarious operations, they are commonly more subject to the rapid current of events than private individuals in the management of their affairs. That this should be the case, is, on the whole, conducive to the benefit of mankind, by serving to impress on their minds the irresistible direction of an over-ruling Providence, *which destroys the wisdom of the wise.*

The various disasters and successes of the continental campaigns of 1795 and 1796 are sufficiently

ciently fresh in every one's memory, to render it unnecessary to insert any recapitulation of them in this place. It ought only to be observed that, during these campaigns, the Emperor's generals and troops displayed the most undaunted courage, and the most excellent military conduct, withstanding the whole collected power of France, and preventing her from extending her ravages and conquests over the whole continent of Europe. Strikingly indeed are the Emperor's firmness, perseverance, and magnanimity at this period, contrasted with the base pusillanimity of Spain, concluding, under the influence of her contemptible Prince of Peace, a disgraceful pacification, and courting the favour of the destroyers of the family of Bourbon, by declaring, against Great Britain, the most unprovoked and unjustifiable war recorded in the annals of history. Some things are so extremely bad, that they admit of no palliation, even from all the arts of sophistry and deception. Accordingly, even those who have attempted to justify or to excuse almost every other act of the enemies of their country, have hitherto abstained from any exculpation of this declaration of war.

It must be owned, that a certain fatality seems to have accompanied the whole conduct of our allies; and it should seem that it had been determined, that they should never constantly persist in that upright and steady career which, what-

ever might be its external success, would always ensure that glory which it is not in the power of reverses of fortune to tarnish. The Emperor's unsteady conduct during the campaign 1794 has already been noticed. This, however, he compensated by the firmness and magnanimity which he continued to display till the fatal moment of concluding his peace with Buonaparte. This I call a *fatal moment*, for, although it appears to have diffused such joy among his subjects, by terminating the horrors of war, and those dangers which threatened his dominions, yet it were to be wished that this peace redounded more to his glory, both with contemporaries and with posterity. To accept of the territories of a power with which he was at peace and in amity, in compensation for the losses he had sustained, was not entirely conformable to what we should expect from a high-spirited and magnanimous Prince.

As good, however, is frequently brought out of evil; so this proceeding of the French with regard to Venice, which they have surrendered to that very power to which they so lately applied all the most odious appellations of despotism, may serve to break the spell by which other nations have been so enchanted as to believe that liberty was to be found in conspiring with the French against their own established government. Indeed this artifice has been in their hands a much more powerful in-

strument of victory than either the abilities of their generals or the bravery of their soldiers. By separating the people from their rulers, and by promising them liberty, which, to those who lived under absolute power, was certainly a very enticing bait, they have prevented their enemies from opposing to them that vigorous resistance which would have effectually checked their career of ambition and conquest. In this has lain the great secret of the multiplied victories of the French, which have been accomplished much more by artifice than by prowess, more by secretly tampering with the subjects of their antagonists than by the achievements of the field.

But this instance of the surrender of Venice cannot but make a deep impression on all those who foolishly believed that the generous desire of communicating liberty to all people was the knight-errantry of the French; and convince them that, when their own interest is served, the liberty and independence of other nations are out of the question.

If, from the continent of Europe, we turn to that part of the war which has been peculiarly our own, and prosecuted on our own element, and with our own undivided resources, we behold a series of success unparalleled in every other contest with France in which we have been engaged. The
glorious

glorious naval victory obtained by Lord Howe on the 1st of June 1794; the defeat of the French fleet by Lord Bridport the succeeding summer; the capture of the whole Dutch Squadron at the Cape of Good Hope by Admiral Elphinstone; Lord St. Vincent's triumph over the Spanish fleet, nearly double to the British in number of ships, and more than double in number of cannon, an action unexampled in naval history; the destruction of three, and the capture of one ship of the line of the same nation by Admiral Harvey in the West Indies; Lord Duncan's glorious and decisive victory over the Dutch, of such vast importance to our security, the universal acclamations for which seem still ringing in our ears; a very great number of the enemy's frigates taken by ours of much inferior force; an infinitely greater number of privateers, insomuch that almost every newspaper contains an account of at least four or five such prizes; one hundred and ten of the enemy's ships of war, of which forty-four of the line, doing most of them service in our own navy; the French marine broken and reduced; the Spanish and Dutch in nearly the same condition, and blocked up in their ports; the commerce of the enemy completely annihilated, and our own flourishing and active—all these memorable and striking circumstances attest the glory of our naval exertions beyond every other period of our history. The whole of the French colonies in the East and West Indies, with the exception of Guadaloupe, in our possession; the

important settlement of the Cape of Good Hope, the extensive and valuable island of Ceylon, all the Dutch spice-islands, their colonies of Demerary and Isiquebo, and the Spanish island of Trinidad, all subjected to the power of Great Britain—these sufficiently proclaim with what success the war has been prosecuted in every quarter which the British navy could reach. In the midst of this extensive, complicated, and very expensive war, our agriculture, manufactures, and commerce have suffered no very remarkable injury, if we consider what might have been expected as the natural effect of hostilities. While the enemy has almost entirely abandoned every permanent source of national welfare, has exhausted his capital, and been reduced to seek the nourishment of the war in the plunder which he could procure, we have hitherto rendered every military and naval exertion subservient to the purposes of protecting our possessions from pillage, and of snatching from the foe many of his richest sources of national prosperity. Have the French at this moment retained a single branch of trade; have they any manufactures, either to exchange for the commodities of other nations, or to increase their resources by the balance in their favour; have they not sacrificed to military glory, and to the mere extension of continental dominion, every object that constitutes real and permanent advantage? Let their œconomists, who have written so ably on national wealth and prosperity, survey the present

present state of their country, and declare how far it accords with their judicious speculations; and let our own countrymen, who stand astonished at the splendour of French victories, and make such disadvantageous comparisons between us and our enemies, say, what they would think if our situation were such as theirs—if our manufactures, our commerce, and all the arts of peace completely ruined or abandoned, we had nothing to compensate the loss, but the triumphs of our arms, and the terror of the British name; or, if they will not grant that the interior of France is in this dismal state, if we were exactly placed at this moment in that state, whatever it may turn out to be, on the most accurate estimation!

While I am thus representing the general success of the war, as far as it has been carried on by the British arms alone, I am not such a blind admirer of administration, or so much devoted to its cause, as to maintain that many faults might not be pointed out, which his Majesty's counsellors must themselves confess, and wish they had been avoided.

The allowing the French to recover any part of the West Indies with such an insignificant force as they sent out for that purpose—the delay of dispatching a sufficient body of troops to expel them again from that quarter, before they had
time

time to fortify themselves in so powerful a manner at Guadaloupe, and to carry such devastation into our own settlements—are subject to blame. It was perhaps also short-sighted, to place such confidence in his Prussian Majesty, after his duplicity was too conspicuous to be mistaken, and to allow him to draw British treasure to contribute his share to the infamous subjugation and partition of Poland. It was perhaps imprudent to withhold a subsidy so long from the Emperor, after he was known to expect it, and thereby to expose the Netherlands to be conquered through his peevish resentment, by which he has, however, been the greatest sufferer himself. To allow the enemies of administration every concession which, with any shadow of justice, they may claim, let us also grant for argument's sake, that, by more accurate information, the French fleet might perhaps have been destroyed on the coast of Ireland, and that the late mutiny among the seamen at Portsmouth might have been prevented by anticipating their demands; let us also grant that more œconomy might have been observed in some branches of public expenditure—yet, to what will these concessions, all of which are far from being necessary, amount, but to those errors to which every human understanding, especially when its objects are uncommonly extensive and complicated, is liable? It is proper to recollect a remark already made, that mistakes are more likely to happen in the conduct

conduct of national than in the conduct of private concerns. If a faultless and infallible ministry can be found, let it in the name of our common country, and of the whole human race, be immediately invested with the power of managing our affairs; nay, what is more, let it supersede the control of both houses of parliament. But if such ministry never has been, and never will be found, let us calmly consider whether our present executive rulers are not, in point of talents, of integrity, and of firmness, at least equal to those who desire to dispossess them, and to leap into their places! Their antagonists will not be disgraced by being raised to this equality; for it is still very doubtful if they would have conducted the war with equal ability and success. To every reasonable and unprejudiced mind it must appear, that that success has been as great as, every circumstance considered, could have been expected, and equal to that of any former war in which Great Britain has been engaged.

3dly, What are the most effectual means of obtaining a speedy, an honourable, and a permanent peace?

These are extremely plain and simple, says one set of men. "Let his Majesty's ministers be removed from his councils for ever, and their opponents put in their places." This is the grand point

point to which all the declamations, both on the injustice and the bad conduct of the war, have been uniformly directed. But, as the war has been proved neither to be unjust on our part, nor to have been on the whole ill conducted, it is already more than probable that this grand expedient, proposed for its happy termination, may be found to be foolish and illusive. A very few considerations will suffice to evince that the wisest thing that can be done will be to allow the pilots, who are now at the helm in the midst of this storm, to bring the vessel of State safely into port, and not to commit her to less experienced hands, who, by shifting her course, may dash her to pieces on the French coast. The present war has strongly evinced the superiority of British seamanship above that of our enemies, whose new speculations and theories have been of little avail on the watery element. It would therefore be advisable to leave our own pilots at the helm, nor trust our safety to those who have learnt their navigation in the Gallic school.

Pax queritur bello is the motto which the usurper Cromwell impressed on some of his coins; and no maxim is better founded in the universal experience of mankind. From the moment that war becomes unavoidable, nothing can obtain such a peace as an independent nation ought to desire, but the vigorous prosecution of it. It was never

known, since the world began, that either in private or in public quarrels, the appearance of dreading an enemy, or the abject conciliation of his favour, obtained a safe and honourable termination of hostility. A firm and intrepid aspect, vigorous and active measures of defence and annoyance, a just confidence in existing resources, an unshaken determination to use them till the enemy be brought to listen to equitable terms, are the only means of procuring such accommodation. These, notwithstanding the swaggering aspect of the French, will infallibly procure us a good peace, at no very distant period. This is so much the case, that even a less inveterate spirit of hostility appearing in our enemies should not induce us immediately to lay down our arms, or to accept of such terms as are incompatible with our security, our honour, or even with those demands which our conquests entitle us to make.

This doctrine is, it is true, repugnant to the pusillanimous sentiments which many seem to have adopted, and to Mr. Erskine's plan of pacification, consisting wholly in manifesting to the French a sincere spirit of reconciliation, as if we had to trust to nothing else but to their generosity, which could not fail to be affected by our professions of repentance and amendment. Of this disposition the most certain evidence would be the dismissal of his Majesty's ministers, as peculiarly

obnoxious to the French government, and the appointment of those to succeed them, for whom that government entertains more regard, and in whom it can place greater confidence. When the guilt of aggression has been contracted, professions of repentance and resolutions of amendment are highly becoming in States, as well as individuals. But when the enemy has been the aggressor, as has been fully proved, much more when he rejects every condition of accommodation but our ruin, such resolutions are entirely out of place, and such professions cannot be excused on any other ground but that of absolute impotence to maintain our independence. That the British nation is reduced to such a state will not be maintained by the warmest advocates of the pacific system. Even on the principles of this system itself, in as far as it implies the desire of peace on rational and solid grounds, in which every good man, and every lover of his country, must concur, supplications to the enemy, and a readiness to accept any terms he may choose to dictate, are the most foolish and preposterous of all measures. Such a peace would only be an encouragement to new hostilities, whenever France should be again disposed and prepared to attack us, and we, from the very nature of our government, totally unprepared for defence. Every argument, drawn from the enormous expence and dreadful calamities of the war, ought to inspire resolution to bring it speedily to a termination,

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compatible both with our honour and interest; in order that that expence may not have been incurred, and those calamities endured in vain; in order that they may not have been incurred and endured for our irretrievable destruction, at no very distant period. Consider, also, if any step can be more degrading to this country than to change its administration, merely because such a change will be agreeable to the enemy; and what patriots must those be, who would accept offices of public trust to which they had been nominated by a French directory? At what period of the British history, previous to the present, would such an idea have been tolerated in this country, and not rather have pointed out those who could have entertained it, as the objects of national indignation and abhorrence?

If men would only allow themselves a moment's reflection, it must immediately occur, that it is the interest of the present ministry to procure to us the speediest and best peace that can be obtained. By protracting the war one hour beyond the moment they can safely and honourably conclude it, they run the risk of being deprived of their power, and of giving every handle to their opponents for loading them, not with fictitious, but with merited reproach. If they have hitherto been insensible of this, the unremitting activity of their enemies, and the general desire of peace must now fully convince

them of it. Indeed it could never have been the interest of the present minister, if he had been actuated solely by selfish motives, to engage in the war at all. By war he exposed to entire derangement his favourite plans of finance; he cast his whole character and influence on the uncertain chance of events, which the most profound wisdom could not control, and from the fluctuating nature of popular favour, which the pressure of public burdens has such a powerful tendency to withdraw, he run the risk of losing that popularity with which he commenced his administration. Of all this he could not be ignorant; for distinguished talents even his enemies cannot deny him; and the natural inference, therefore, is, that he found himself forced into the war by motives superior to every consideration of his own interest or power.

After having, hitherto, conducted that war, it is evidently his interest, and that of those with whom he acts, to bring it to a termination the most speedy, the most advantageous, and the most honourable to this nation. A dishonourable, or even a disadvantageous peace impairs Mr. Pitt's reputation, not only with the present, but with all succeeding generations, which shall read the event recorded in history. On the other hand, no responsibility of this kind rests, in appearance at least, with the leaders of opposition. I say *in appearance*; for our internal divisions certainly encouraged

couraged the enemy in the commencement, and still encourage him in the prosecution of the war. Those who reprobated it from the beginning, may always pretend that they cannot be chargeable with the terms of peace whatever they may be. Nay, it is in some respect their interest that these should be as bad as possible, in order to prove in the most experimental manner, by the disastrous termination of it, that their opposition to the war was well grounded. If, in private life, therefore, it would be considered as extremely foolish for a man to commit the management of his business to a person, whose interest it was that it should turn out to his employer's detriment, and wise to make choice of an agent whose interest was inseparably connected with its success; on the same grounds, it must be desirable for the British nation, that the present ministry should negotiate a peace whenever it can be obtained with security and honour. Nothing, of consequence, could be more contrary to the public welfare, in the present crisis, than the petitions which many, governed entirely by passion or prejudice, presented for the dismissal of his Majesty's ministers. This argument holds good, even although the selfishness imputed by their enemies to ministry should be granted—a concession, however, made only for the sake of this argument: for the various objects of national policy, which have been successfully pursued during their administration, have sufficiently proved their

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extraordinary attention, their assiduity, and zeal for the public welfare. The principle on which the present war was undertaken, the protection of our laws, religion, liberty, and independence, has already been evinced. That the war has, upon the whole, been well conducted, has also been fully proved. The magnanimous offer of compensation made by his Majesty, through the channel of Lord Malmesbury, in his first negotiation, in order to purchase peace and security for our allies, as well as for all Europe, but insolently rejected by the enemy, sufficiently demonstrated that the present ministry was not desirous of prolonging hostilities, from motives of false honour, or from any blind and obstinate attachment to a particular system; and the last negotiation at Lisle affords a proof of this, which partiality itself must acknowledge.

By including above, in the objects of the present war, the defence of our religion, it is impossible not to advert to the egregious fallacy of one of Mr. Erskine's arguments on this very subject. He justly observes that Christianity cannot be defended by force of arms. But of this the meaning can only be, that the truth of our religion can never be established, or its influence extended, by compulsion. In this sentiment I perfectly agree with him, and will also maintain that nothing has been more prejudicial to the interests of Christianity, and to every thing that merits the name

name of religion, than every attempt of this kind, of which there have been but too many melancholy instances in the world. But will any man deny that, if irreligion and atheism are propagated by violence, it is lawful and obligatory on every man, who values religious principle, to resist that violence, and to maintain his faith by opposing those persecutors who would cruelly forbid him the profession of it? In this sense, we may lawfully and gloriously fight for Christianity. In this sense, Mahometans, attempting to propagate their religion by fire and sword, were justly resisted by Christians, on religious principle. In this sense, the first reformers nobly contended, by force of arms, with their blood-thirsty persecutors, who denied them the free exercise of the Christian religion in its native purity. In this sense, the religious violence of the Quakers in England, and of the Anabaptists in Holland, endeavouring to subvert all civil government, under pretence of their principles, was justly opposed, punished, and restrained. Here, then, lies the fallacy of Mr. Erskine's reasoning on this subject, that he confounds the maintenance and propagation of truth, with the defence of the right of professing it, when that right is attacked by open violence. For the former it is never lawful, and is always absurd and pernicious, to employ force. For the preservation of the latter, *force* may, and often must, be repelled by *force*.

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A very foolish argument for dismissing his Majesty's ministers seems to have, with many, considerable weight; and this argument is, that since the beginning of this century, no minister who has conducted a war, has concluded a peace. If the historical fact were true, the inference, which it is produced to establish, would not necessarily follow. But there are only two instances besides the peace which terminated the American war, in which the fact itself has any foundation, and both of them tend to prove the absurdity of the conclusion intended. These instances are the peace of Utrecht in the year 1712; and that concluded at Paris in 1763. Now, it is certain that, by neither of these treaties of peace, the interests of Great Britain were duly considered; that, in the former particularly, a most shameful dereliction of every principle on which the war had been undertaken was evidenced, and the honour of the nation prostituted; that this was solely occasioned by the sudden overthrow of the ministry which had so gloriously conducted that war, and by the unprincipled elevation of their antagonists; and that in both of these cases a much more honourable and advantageous peace for this country and its allies might have been obtained, if it had been concluded by those ministries by which the war had been most vigorously prosecuted. But setting these particular instances aside, the thing speaks for itself, that it is always safer to commit the termination

nation of a war to those who have conducted it, than to those who have not; because, as has been already stated, the responsibility which attaches to the former, is a pledge to the nation, of their exerting themselves to the utmost, to procure the best peace possible; while no such responsibility attaching to the latter, they have it always in their power to screen themselves from the ignominy of a detrimental pacification, by alleging that, as the war was not theirs, so they were obliged to accept any terms they could obtain, and that all the evil consequences of these are wholly chargeable on their predecessors. When it is considered with what indefatigable industry and perseverance a certain set of men have defended the enemy's cause, with what marked partiality they have reprobated every measure employed against him, with what hyperbolical amplification they have commemorated all his triumphs, with what faint and forced praise they have mentioned the most splendid exploits of the defenders of their country, with what exultation they contemplate every disaster, whether foreign or domestic, that befalls us, with what callous indifference they look forward to the dreadful national calamities which their conduct is calculated to produce; it is neither an unjust nor an irrational conclusion to suppose, that, for the attainment of the mean and contemptible objects of party, they would hardly scruple to sacrifice the present and future welfare of their country. In-

sensible to every real British sentiment, they seem alive only and feeling to the principles of faction, and to Gallic prejudices. When we consider how invariably the same object has been pursued, namely, the overthrow of the present administration, and their own advancement to power; when we consider, that, for this purpose, the most inconsistent opinions have been adopted, according as they appeared subservient to the general scheme, we have little ground to hope that their country's welfare will with them have any weight, when put in the opposite scale with their ruling passion. When they thought that the fear of domestic troubles, or of foreign invasion, served to strengthen the hands of government, by increasing the armed force of the country, they ridiculed ministers and their friends with the name of *Alarmists*. When these alarms seemed to impress the public mind with too deep a sense of danger, induced numbers to withdraw their money from circulation, and thus embarrassed the operations of government, those persons immediately altered their tone, aggravated the danger, represented the country as on the brink of ruin, and spread an alarm of all the most dangerous, because its effect was not to prevent evil by vigorous exertion, but to entail it upon us by the inaction of despondency. When the spirit of the country seemed to be sufficiently awake to its own interest and preservation, and deprived the party of all hopes of
success,

success, they appeared to have relinquished their objects for the sake of public tranquillity; but no sooner did a favourable gleam of hope burst in upon them, from the general impatience under the burdens and continuance of the war, or occasional reverses happening in its course, but they immediately returned to the charge, and supposing that their opponents were discouraged, or had lost their former energy, renewed those arguments which had been so often refuted, hoping that, amidst the impressions of more recent transactions, these refutations had been forgotten, and their effect had completely ceased. But the friends of the British constitution, of social order, of religion, and of public happiness, are not unmindful of their duty. They are even roused to fresh efforts by the activity of their adversaries, and by those calamitous events of which these know so well to avail themselves for their own purposes. —Although the number of professed republicans, and of open abettors of the French in this country, is, they are persuaded, but small at present, yet they are too well acquainted with the progress of political contagion, not to fear that it might increase. The generality of mankind is dazzled by the splendour of victory, and, from blind admiration, the transition is easy to an opinion that a government so splendidly victorious as the French have been, must be the best that a people can adopt. The few determined republicans,

aided by the directory, might avail themselves of this disposition to explode the British constitution, as an old Gothic fabric which ought to give place to a stately edifice constructed on the French model. That there should be found, in any country, men of ancient, noble, and opulent families who could favour a system by which their hereditary or acquired distinctions must be confounded with the vulgar mass, appears an unaccountable paradox. But ambition in some, and resentment in others, easily solves this phenomenon; for nothing that regular and constitutional rank and pre-eminence can bestow, is equal to the distinction and power enjoyed by the member of a directory. Disappointed pride will sometimes run every risk, and despise every principle, to gratify resentment. Men whose ruling passion is ambition, may be compared to gamesters, who never think of the many chances of ruin which are against them, and direct all their views to the rich and splendid stake for which they play. Such is the progress of every strong passion deeply rooted in the mind, that it is impossible to say to what extremities it may proceed; and the most melancholy apprehensions are therefore justified by the intemperance and obstinacy of those who, in the pursuit of a favourite object, have already manifested a disregard of all such considerations as ought to influence a sincere lover of his country. The very men who dethroned and murdered Lewis the Sixteenth,

Sixteenth, not only professed attachment to the constitution which should have preserved his throne, and secured the inviolability of his person, but solemnly swore to maintain it. Even Cromwell himself never imagined, in the beginning, that he would have proceeded to such lengths. He said, with Hazael the Syrian, *Is thy servant a dog, that he should do this great thing?* Yet he murdered his master, and reigned in his stead. That similar characters may exist in this or in any other country, who may be carried to the same degree of wickedness, by tempting combinations of circumstances, it is neither unjust nor precipitate to assert.

It is, however, a most fortunate and agreeable circumstance, that the deep-rooted hostility of the enemy has at last convinced many, who were adverse to the principle of the war, of the necessity of uniting, in order to resist his destructive designs with the genuine spirit of Britons. Those who have thus sacrificed every attachment of party to the defence and salvation of their country, have proved that their former opposition to the present administration was founded on principle, and redeemed the pledge which they had given, that, as soon as fair conditions of peace were proposed to the enemy, and he rejected them, they would most cordially join with the executive government in maintaining the cause of their country against

his injustice and insatiable ambition. It is only to be regretted that such men, whose love of their country now rises superior to every other consideration, did not sooner perceive that nothing fair or candid, with respect to Great Britain, was ever to be expected from Jacobin France, and that all her inclinations, all her principles, (if total want of principle can merit that name,) and all her interests, led her to conspire the destruction, or, at least, the reduction of this nation to such a state as threatened no further opposition to her views of aggrandisement and conquest. It is certain that her hopes of success, with regard to us, have been founded, as with regard to other countries, on our intestine divisions, which led her to suppose that inveterate party-spirit would carry a considerable number among us to sacrifice the dearest interests of their country to its gratification. The rulers of France may now see, indeed, that the old British character is not entirely lost, and that there is in this country a spirit which they have not found in any other—a spirit of liberty, supported by rational principles, animated by the approach of danger to our constitution, and our invaluable national privileges and blessings, and determined to defend these against all the efforts they can make to destroy them. How much is it to be regretted that this spirit was not sooner roused in some, and ever allowed to flag and waver in others! For there is every

every ground to suppose that, if our enemies had long since observed among us the same approach to unanimity which they have, at last, produced by their mad and malignant pretensions, they would never have thought of advancing them, and been brought to terms of pacification consistent both with the safety and the honour of this country. But it is not too late to display the spirit which now appears to pervade the great majority of this nation. This, if properly directed and firmly maintained, will, under the blessing of Providence, bring the enemy to his senses, and convince him, not only that his wild schemes of invasion and conquest, but even his hopes of reducing us to degrading terms of accommodation, are utterly delusive. Our former advances, our reiterated attempts at procuring peace, by courting negotiations, he considered as only so many proofs of our weakness, as confessions of fear, as indications of a temper that might, at last, be brought to accept any terms he might please to dictate. But we are, at last, got into the right way,—that which may lead us, perhaps, through some very rough road, and over the steep ascent of honour, but which will bring us much sooner to that peace which Great Britain can accept, than that smooth winding path which has hitherto brought us to the brink of a precipice from which we have beheld the gulph into which the enemy intended to plunge us.

Why

Why then do not the late leaders of Opposition now come, and with a manly spirit redeem the pledge which they long since gave, to unite for the vigorous prosecution of the war, whenever fair and equitable conditions of peace should have been offered by our government and rejected by the enemy? These conditions have been offered, and, with the utmost indignity, rejected. Will any pretend that we ought to have accepted any peace which our enemies might dictate? Such can never be the sense annexed to those conditions, the offer of which was necessary to purchase the hearty co-operation of the leaders of Opposition in the event of their being refused. Is there any impartial man in the country who will maintain that the proposals made to the enemy did not go as far as the honour and the safety of Great Britain would permit? Why then does the patriotism of the gentlemen above-mentioned extend no farther than, by absenting themselves from their parliamentary duty, not actually to oppose those measures of defence and security to their country which they had pledged themselves to support? If they are ashamed of changing that tenour of conduct which they have hitherto pursued, let them reflect that in this there would be no inconsistency with their former principles; nay, that, if they are consistent with their declarations, and faithful to their promises, they ought now to allow their country the full benefit of their talents, and to establish that complete unanimity which would be the secret presage of its safety and glory.

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Are there any who are still deluded with the idea of French liberty to be extended to all nations? Let them review the last revolution at Paris, when the despotism of three members of the directory arrested, and, without form of trial, condemned to transportation two of their own colleagues and sixty other members of their legislative bodies. If his Majesty's ministers, acting by his authority, should adopt such a proceeding in this country, what opinion should we entertain of our liberty; and if it were quietly submitted to, should we not think it lost for ever? For an instance of despotism more detestable than this the annals of history cannot exhibit. So shocking indeed has it been, that many, whose predilection for French principles was unshaken by so many other deeds of oppression and violence, have been overpowered by this, and admitted into their minds that aversion for them which has long since prevailed in the breast of every rational friend to liberty, and of every well-informed lover of his country. May this spirit, this just notion of French principles and politics, this firm determination to maintain, according to the abilities of every individual, his country's cause, be extended among us more and more, till it amount to that perfect unanimity which every true Briton so ardently desires, and every discerning man considers as synonymous with the complete defeat and disgrace of our enemies. A free people, uniting as one man, for its defence, is invincible; and if this is our case, every attempt to

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invade our shores will only serve to dash in pieces the force of the invaders, as the waves are dashed and broken on the rocks that surround our island, and return in foam to the ocean from which they were rolled.

The continental conquests of the French, instead of debilitating, ought to animate and quicken our efforts. It must occur to every reflecting person that, since France has given law to the continent of Europe, and extended her power and dominion to a degree more nearly approaching universal empire, than any thing known in modern times, it is of the utmost consequence to Great Britain, and, it may be added, to every other State but France, that some maritime counterpoise should be established, and an effectual barrier opposed to her extending, as she will not fail to attempt as soon as her recruited strength shall enable her, her sceptre over the ocean, as she has extended it over the land.

The present reduced condition of her navy, and even her internal debility, after the violent efforts she has made on the continent, afford an almost certain prospect of success to those exertions which may yet be necessary for obtaining such a peace as Great Britain can accept. It is perhaps reserved for this country to set bounds to that ambition, rapacity, and violence, which threatened, and had nearly

accomplished the threat, to involve in one promiscuous ruin the religion, the morality, the liberty, and the civilization of Europe. This is an object calculated to rouse the most indifferent, to inflame the most selfish, and to quicken the most lethargic spirit—an object which, if obtained, will not only render us more respectable and glorious than ever, but also increase our sources of prosperity and wealth, and place, on a firm foundation, whatever a war ought to be undertaken to preserve, and a peace concluded to establish.

THE END.

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